



## ARMENIAN CITY QUARTERS AND THE ARCHITECTURAL LEGACY OF THE PONTUS

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For Armenian merchants from medieval times to the twentieth century, Pontus was the northern outlet to Europe. The ancient cities of the region such as Sinope, Samsun, Charshamba, Unieh, Fatsa, Ordu, Kerasund (Giresun; Girason), Tireboli (Tripoli), Trebizond (Trabzon), Gumushkhane, Rize, Athina (Pazar), and others were important commercial centers. Pontus had a population of various ethnic groups. While Armenians were present from ancient times until the deportations and massacres of 1915, only the remnants of a few churches and other communal structures now exist. Information on these buildings comes mostly from past Armenian publications. Among these are Minas Bzhshkian's history of the Pontus; Bishop Abel Mkhitarian's study of Armenian immigration to Trebizond; Ghukas Inchichian's geography of Armenia; Hakovbos Tashian's survey of the Armenian population from the Black Sea to Karin (Erzerum); and Hamazasp Oskian's descriptions of the monasteries of Trebizond and three other provinces.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Minas Bzhshkian, *Patmutiun Pontosi or e Sev Tsov* [History of Pontus on the Black Sea] (Venice: Mekhitarist Press, 1819); Abel Mkhitarian, *Vep gaghtakanutian Hayots Trapizoni* [Story of Immigration of the Armenians of Trebizond] (Constantinople: "Masis," 1857); Ghukas Inchichian, *Ashkharhagrutiun chorits masants ashkharhi* [Geography of the Four Parts of the World] (Venice: Mekhitarist Press, 1802-1806); Hakovbos Tashian [Dashian], *Hay bnakhutiune Sev tsoven minchev Karin* [The Armenian Population from the Black Sea to Karin], *Handes Amsoria* 1-2, 3-4 (1921): 52-62, 181-220, and his *Hay azgi ev hatkapes Karno taregrutiune germaneren vaverageru hamemat* [The Annals of the Armenian People and Particularly of Karin According to German Documents] *Handes Amsoria* 5-6, 7-8 (1921): 315-31, 395-403; Hamazasp Oskian [Voskian], *Sebastiayi, Kharberdi, Diarbekiri ev Trapizoni nahangneru vankere* [The Monasteries of the Provinces of Sebastia, Kharberd, Diarbekir, and Trebizond] (Vienna: Mekhitarist Press, 1962), and his *Bardzr Hayki*

In addition, there are descriptive materials in the travelogues of Evliya Chelebi (seventeenth century) and Karl Koch (nineteenth century) and the valuable topographic surveys of H.F.B. Lynch at the turn of the twentieth century.<sup>2</sup> There are also the documents of the Russian Central Military Archives in Moscow as well as in military publications in Russian by specialists such as N.G. Korsun, S.R. Mintslov, V.T. Maevskii, and N.V. Novikov.<sup>3</sup> These publications have been utilized in this study to explore the Armenian architectural styles in Trebizond, other coastal towns, and the inland region between the Pontus and the Armenian Highland.

### *The City of Trebizond*

Before the great massacres in 1915, there were eight Armenian quarters in Trebizond with several Armenian schools and four churches as well a national caravanserai (inn) and other commercial buildings (Fig. 1).<sup>4</sup> Around Trebizond were some ten Armenian monasteries and many Armenian villages, such as Zefanos, Sovuksu, Kropin, Pariam, and Platana. The city of Trebizond slopes down from Boz Tepe to the Black Sea, forming an amphitheater with the two neighboring valleys to the east and west. According to Lynch's survey, its layout consisted

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*vankere* [The Monasteries of Upper Armenia] (Vienna: Mekhitarist Press, 1951).

<sup>2</sup> Evliya Chelebi, *Siahat-Name* [Travels], selected passages translated by Arshak Safrastyan in the series *Otar aghbyurnere Hayastani ev hayeri masin* [Foreign Sources about Armenia and Armenians], vol. 4: *Turkakan aghbyurner, III* [Turkish Sources, III] (Erevan: Armenian Academy of Sciences, 1967); Karl Koch, *Reise im pontischen Gebirge und türkischen Armenien* (Weimar: Druck und Verlag des Landes Industrie Comptoirs, 1846); H.F.B. Lynch, *Armenia: Travels and Studies*, vol. I: *Russian Provinces* (London: Longmans, Green: 1901).

<sup>3</sup> Nikolai G. Korsun, *Pervaia mirovaia voina na Kavkazskom fronte* [The First World War on the Caucasus Front] (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1946); Sergei R. Mintslov, *Statisticheskii ocherk Trapizondskago okruga noiabr' 1916 goda* [Statistical Notes of the Trebizond District in November 1916] (Trebizond: Izd. Shtab-okruga, 1916); V.T. Maevskii, *Puti Maloi Azii v rayone mezhdru Samsunom i Aleksandretskim zalivom: Rekognostiurovka provedennaia rossiiskim Imperatorskim Vitse-Konsulom v Rize* [Routes of Asia Minor in the Region between Samsun and the Gulf of Alexandria: Reconnaissance of the Russian Imperial Vice Consul at Rize (Tiflis: Tip. Shtaba Zakavkazskago voennago okruga, 1903); Nikolai V. Novikov, *Operatsiia flota protiv berega na Chernom more v 1914-17* [Naval Operation against the Coastline of the Black Sea, 1914-17] (Moscow: Mor-Akad RKKK, 1937).

<sup>4</sup> Trebizond is also rendered in the sources as Trapizon, Trapzun, Trapezon, Trapezos, Trabzon, and other variants. Western Armenians pronounce it as Drabizon.

of three main parts with seven individual zones. The citadel was the most important landmark. To the north toward the sea were the middle and the lower fortresses overlooking the skillfully-designed harbor. On both sides of the citadel and walled city were the suburbs, which were spread over the eastern and western slopes. Ottoman regulations required the Christian inhabitants to live outside the walled city.<sup>5</sup> Thus, most commercial buildings were in the suburbs, whereas the cemeteries were located on the southern bounds of the city.

The citadel, Kuli Hisar, has antique features of military architecture. It was an ensemble made up of the citadel itself, an open theater, and a hippodrome on the south side. The citadel covers around 2 hectares (5 acres). The entrance is from the south, beside the historic tower of Ioannes (John) IV. At the center of the citadel is the ceremonial courtyard, from which an extended *dromos* (passageway) leads to the inner courtyard. Nearby is the palace with a beautiful *thermae* (bath). The palace is triangular in shape, the base opening toward the city and the sea. The triangle is an isosceles (two sides of equal length): the base is 140 meters (394 feet) and the height is 200 meters (656 feet). In its composition and distribution, the palace resembles many medieval castles of Armenia such as those at Dvin, Ani, Smbataberd, and Sis. At every corner of the citadel there are high towers. The eastern tower of the palace is adjacent to the eastern gate of the walled city, hence the name Tower Gate.

The fortress or the walled city is located below the citadel to the north and is divided into the Middle Town and the Lower Town. The Middle Town, by its network of streets and the arrangement of the gates, is obviously of an antique tradition. According to Lynch's map,<sup>6</sup> the center of the Middle Town consisted of two perpendicularly-crossed streets, around which are the remains of an ancient *agora* (central marketplace). The site of the city in planning principles is analogous to Greek and Byzantine cities, as well Armenian cities such as Ani, Lori Berd, and Baghesh. The area of the Middle Town is 8 hectares (20 acres). It is 200 meters (656 feet) long east to west and 400 meters (1312 feet) north to south.

The Middle Town is almost rectangular in shape. The northern gate opens toward the Lower Town. The eastern and the western gates open toward the suburbs and accordingly are called "Prison Gate" and "Gate

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<sup>5</sup> Inchichian, *Ashkharhagrutiun*, p. 387.

<sup>6</sup> Lynch, *Armenia*, vol.1, map facing p. 15.

of Dye Shops.” The gates are also adjacent to the bridges entering the city from the Guzugun and Ishkale valleys on either side of the city. At the crossing of the two main streets and around the *tetrapylon* (entrance) of the ancient agora is the old palace or *serai*, not far from the Greek Church of Saint Ioannes, which was converted to a mosque after the Ottoman conquest of Trebizond.<sup>7</sup> At the other end of this square are two baths, a *medrese* (Islamic religious school) in an old Greek structure, a school, and other buildings.<sup>8</sup> Evliya Chelebi described the place in the seventeenth century as follows: “The Middle Town’s fortification is a long and strong wall. Here, on the east, beside the Castle Gate is the New Jumaa [Friday] Gate.”<sup>9</sup> Comparing this information with other sources, it becomes obvious that the medieval downtown extended from the antique agora and spread from the gates toward the suburbs.

The Lower Town was built later than the Middle Town. This fact is evident from the different masonry style and features of military architecture as well from the inscriptions of the emperors Justinian and Alexius on the old city walls. The Lower Town was constructed in the period of the Comnenus dynasty of the Empire of Trebizond (thirteenth-fifteenth centuries). According to Lynch’s map, the area of the Lower Town was almost three times larger than that of the Middle Town. It extended from the north and northwest of the Middle Town to the coast, terminating at the sea next to the fortified harbor. There were eight gates in the walls of the Lower Town. Public and commercial buildings were located on the both sides of the streets extending from the gates to the center of the city.

The changes caused by the construction of the Lower Town altered the role of the agora, as the Lower Town replaced it as the center of commercial activity. Only the artisan lanes which used raw materials from the surrounding mines remained in their original place adjacent to the gates of the Middle Town. The names of the gates conveyed the make-up of the Lower Town: on the north, “Gate of the Sea”; on the east, “Bazaar Gate” and “Candle-Makers Gate”; on the west, “Gate of the Sothk Suburb” and “Palace Gate.” The fortifications of the Lower Town were more regular than those of the Middle Town. Ghukas Inchichian describes the lower fortifications as being so high and wide

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<sup>7</sup> Inchichian, *Ashkharhagrutiun*, p. 385.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Evliya Chelebi, *Siahat-Name*, p. 44.

that a cart could be driven on the wall, "which was built over the ruins of an older wall bearing Greek inscriptions on the huge stones scattered here and there."<sup>10</sup> According to the measurements of Evliya Chelebi, the length of the city walls was 9,000 steps (23,240 feet).<sup>11</sup> The harbor was designed to serve fifty ships. According to Lynch's second map, it was a semicircular area with a perimeter of neatly arranged shops.<sup>12</sup> The radius of the harbor was 140 meters (460 feet).<sup>13</sup> There were seven other unprotected harbors facing the suburbs on either side of the main harbor.

The suburbs lay on the east and west sides of the city. On the same city map by Lynch, these were typical medieval urban additions. Actually, their planning was based on the principle of one parochial church per quarter. This fact is obvious from the distribution of the churches (indicated on the map) as Saint Grigorios, Georgi, Christos, Ciryacus, Vasil, Farros, Stefanos, Philippo, as well as Chomlekji.<sup>14</sup> The eastern sector in the nineteenth century was five times larger than the fortified town. It had an open harbor along the seaside. According to Lynch's city map, near the gate of the eastern suburb were two Greek churches—Saint Vasil and Saint Anna. Not far from them was the central market or *bedestan* and the Great Mosque. Other travel documentation indicates that there were also ten caravanserais or inns.<sup>15</sup> The eastern suburb of Trebizond formed a city into itself. Aside from the commercial center, there was a carefully designed square named Giavur Meydan (Infidel Square).<sup>16</sup> Inchichian notes: "On the eastern edge of the suburb is an expansive square as a stopping place for the caravans, which is called Giavur Meydan."<sup>17</sup>

According to Lynch's description, on the northern side of the eastern suburb were many places belonging to Franks and Genoese. On his second map under numbers 10 and 11 are shown Guzel Serai (Beautiful Palace), built on the former Greek dwellings adjacent to a promon-

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<sup>10</sup> Inchichian, *Ashkharhagrutian*, p. 386.

<sup>11</sup> Evliya Chelebi, *Siahat-Name*, p. 44.

<sup>12</sup> Lynch, *Armenia*, vol. 1, map facing p. 30.

<sup>13</sup> Bzhshkian, *Patmutiun Pontosi*, p. 75.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, pp. 76-77.

<sup>15</sup> Inchichian, *Ashkharhagrutian*, p. 389.

<sup>16</sup> *Giavur* means infidel or non-believer and was the name given to Christians in the Ottoman Empire, indicating Armenians or Greeks.

<sup>17</sup> Inchichian, *Ashkharhagrutian*, p. 389.

tory on top of which there was a lighthouse and a church.<sup>18</sup> Regarding the same part of the city, Minas Bzhshkian has written:

On both sides of the fortress there are two suburbs, each having a square. The square of the western suburb is called Kabak Meydan,<sup>19</sup> the center of the eastern suburb is called Giavur Meydan, which is 278 steps [720 feet] long and 180 [415 feet] wide.<sup>20</sup> The notables of the city often used the square for horsemanship. All around the perimeter of the squares are shops and some residential buildings; to the east side are the Great Mosque and a fountain; at the south side are the houses of the Armenian inhabitants with their bountiful gardens.<sup>21</sup>

Away from the square toward the coast were also numerous shops. There was a customs house beside the lighthouse. Beyond were the cemeteries of the Christians, belonging to the Armenian Apostolic, Catholic, and Evangelical communities and to the Latins, and Greeks.

About this commercial part of the city, Evliya Chelebi observed: "The best of the commercial lanes is the part neighboring the Candle-Makers Gate. These are beautiful and rich shops extending from the gate to the coast. Here is a bedestan; the owners of the shops are mainly rich foreigners. At the Orta Hisar [Middle Town], there are various guilds having 70 to 80 shops, all together called by the inhabitants as 'the small marketplace'."<sup>22</sup>

The western suburb reached out in the opposite direction from the walled city. According to the layout published by Lynch, the northern part of the western suburb was the Turkish "Sothk quarter." At the center of this sector were many public buildings, including a gymnasium, an alms house, and a hospital. From here to the shore was a long street passing through Armenian and Greek quarters from the southwest but also interspersed by parts of the Turkish quarters. Kersam Aharonian has asserted that many Turkish houses were placed in such a way as to fragment the Armenian and Greek neighborhoods.<sup>23</sup> Otherwise that sector would have had a purely Christian population.

<sup>18</sup> Lynch, *Armenia*, vol. I, map of "Trebizond and Surroundings" and pp. 30-31.

<sup>19</sup> Lynch, p. 24, mentions the name of the square as "Kavak" or "Plane Tree."

<sup>20</sup> One step is equal to 80 centimeters. Thus, the dimension of the square is 222.5 by 144 meters.

<sup>21</sup> Bzhshkian, *Patmutiun Pontosi*, p. 75.

<sup>22</sup> Evliya Chelebi, *Siahat-Name*, p. 45.

<sup>23</sup> Kersam Aharonian, *Hushamatian Mets Egherni, 1915-1965* [Memorial Volume of the Great Crime, 1915-1965] (Beirut: Atlas, 1965), pp. 466-71.

Thus, there were thirty-six quarters in Trebizond of which eight were Armenian.<sup>24</sup> There was only one Armenian quarter in the western suburb, the other seven being on the eastern side. Hence, about one-sixth of Trebizond's inhabitants were Armenian. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, they resided primarily near the eastern gates of the Middle Town and Lower Town. Without doubt, the Armenian community had lived within the walled city in Byzantine times. Like other Christians under Ottoman rule, however, they had to move into the suburbs. Until the tragic events of 1915, there were between 14,000 to 15,000 Armenians residing in the city and around 22,000 in the district as a whole.<sup>25</sup> The Armenian community institutions in the city included four churches, both public national (*azgayin*) and private schools, a prelacy, clubhouses and halls, marketplaces, and caravanse-rais. Around 1800, the community established its first school. Then in 1817, a second school was opened by Minas Bzhshkian. Eventually, there were also coeducational and girls' schools.<sup>26</sup> An Armenian theater operated regularly between 1855 and 1860. In addition, the local press reported on activities of the prelacy, library, and so forth. These were adjacent to the Church of Surb Oksent/Okhsent (Auxentios), which was in the downtown quarter of Duzlu Cheshme.<sup>27</sup>

### *Armenian Churches of Trebizond*

There were four working Armenian churches in Trebizond (Figs. 2-1, 2-2, 2-3, 2-4). There were also a number of public buildings such as

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Inchichian, *Ashkharhagrutiun*, p. 387.

<sup>25</sup> T.Kh. Hakobyan, St.T. Melik-Bakhshyan, and H.Kh. Barseghyan, *Hayastani ev harakits shrjanneri teghanunneri bararan* [Dictionary of Place-Names of Armenia and Adjacent Territories], 5 vols. (Erevan: Erevan State University, 1988-2001), vol. 5, p. 128.

<sup>26</sup> See Barsegh Sargisian, *Erk-hariuramia grakan gortsuneutiun ev nshanavor gortsichner Venediko miabanutian* [Two Centuries of Literary Activity and Noted Figures of the Brotherhood of Venice] (Venice: Mekhitarist Press, 1905), p. 40; Mesrop Chanashian (Janashian), "Arevmtahay bem ev anor glkhavor nerkayatsut-sichnere" [The Western Armenian Stage and Its Foremost Representatives], *Bazmavep* 7-8 (1950): 145.

<sup>27</sup> Arman Gotikian, "Dprotsa-taterakan kyanke Trapizonum, 1815-1915 tverin". [School and Theatrical Life in Trebizond, 1815-1915], *Teghekgagir: Hasarakakan gitutyunner* 7 (1962): 45, 50-51.

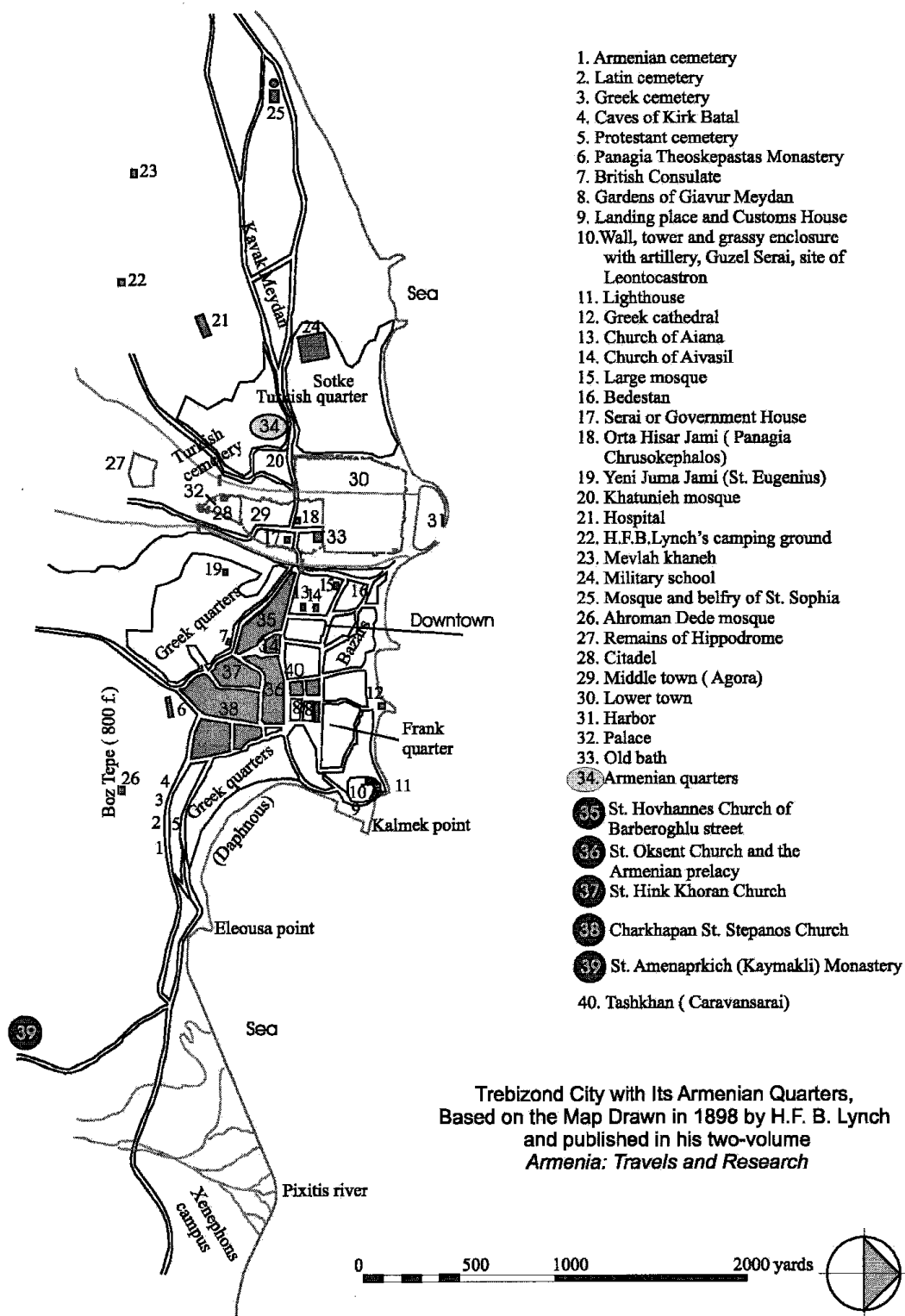
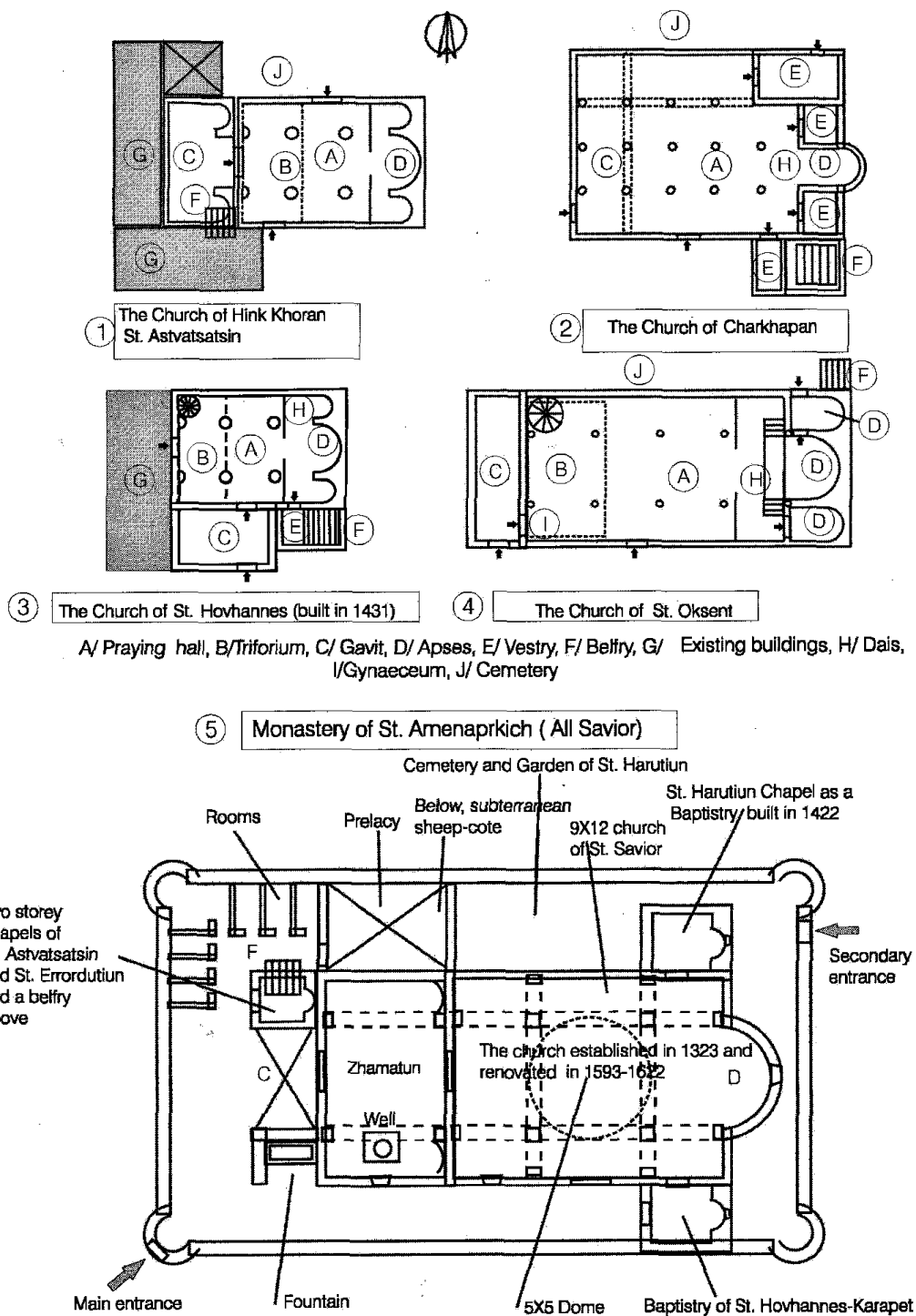


Fig. 1. Trebizond City with Its Armenian Quarters





THE ARMENIAN CHURCHES OF TREBIZOND (reconstruction)

Fig. 2. The Armenian Churches of Trebizond

the bath known as the Giavur Hamam and the Dashkhan caravanse-rai.<sup>28</sup> The Armenian churches of Trebizond were built in Byzantine times. They were Hing Khoran Surb Astvatsatsin, Charkhapan Surb Stepanos, Surb Hovhannes, and Surb Oksent.

### The Church of Hing Khoran Surb Astvatsatsin

The name of the monument translates to "Holy Mother of God Church with Five Altars" (Fig. 2-1). Surb Astvatsatsin was built in an extensive space in the Armenian quarters near the commercial buildings adjacent to the eastern suburb. This was one of the oldest sites of Armenian habitation in Trebizond. The Hing Khoran church belonged to the Catholic minority of the Armenian community. The complex consisted of the main church, *gavit* (antechamber), *zhamatun* (oratorium; narthex), vestry, and a medieval cemetery. Bzhshkian states that the bell tower was built solidly above the *gavit* and supported by the apses of its altars, which were likewise solid and arched.<sup>29</sup> An inscription over Surb Hakob apse at the northeast of the *gavit* read: "The Church of Surb Hakob built for the memory of Aghribash and his parents in 1414." On the southern apse of the *gavit*, another inscription read: "Built this luminous altar of Surb Stepan to the glory of God by the priests Grigor, Hohan [sic], Sargis, and all the people who labored here during the reign of Kir Manuel and Kir Alexius in 1414, Amen." Bzhshkian noted: "All around the church are tombs. There are some recently built houses in the southwest part of the area. Actually the well in the former courtyard of the complex is now inside the houses. . . . The church has two entrances, one from the north and the other from the south. The triforium [*vernatur*] for the women is accessible from the south."

Surb Astvatsatsin, a traditional church composition of the Trebizond region, consisted of a *gavit* having two altars and a small tri-apsidal church, the apses being arranged in a linear order on the east side. The church was of the four-column basilica type. On the western side there was a wooden triforium for women attending the Divine Liturgy. The altars of the *gavit* and the *zhamatun* were at the northeast and

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<sup>28</sup> There were many public baths in Trebizond, among the most noted of which were Kule, Imaret, Chifte (subterranean), and Pasha. See Bzhshkian, *Patmutiun Pontosi*, pp. 65-68, 79.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 79.

northwest corners and named after Surb Stepanos and Surb Hakob. There were two vestries on both sides of the gavit as auxiliary rooms. In its original design the church had a well at the entrance court which played the role of an atrium (courtyard).

On the basis of fifteenth-century inscriptions, one may conclude that the gavit was an extension to an already-existing building. Thus, the complex dates back at least to the times of the Comneni emperors in Trebizond, where the size of the Armenian community was large enough to have four priests in one church. Moreover, the foundational Church of Surb Astvatsatsin was clearly in place by the first decade of the fifteenth century.

### **The Church of Charkhapan Surb Stepanos**

The name of the church translates to "Warder-off-of-Evil Saint Stephen" (Fig. 2-2). According to local tradition, the name derived from the fact that one of the builders fell from a great height without being hurt. The church was a three-nave basilica with ceiling vaults. There reportedly was a bell tower on the southeast corner. Adjacent to the church was the Holy Cross cemetery.<sup>30</sup>

According to the description of Abel Mkhitarian, Charkhapan Surb Stepanos was a stone-built three-nave-basilica church vaulted from the inside. Externally, its roof was sloped and covered with tiles. The altar consisted of three apses, the main one projecting out in a semicircular form from the plane of the eastern facade. The two-storey bell tower was placed over the southern apse. In its initial form, the church was small, but in 1829 it was much enlarged as the bequest of the Elmasian family.

The original building consisted of the church and gavit separated by a transversal wall. They were connected by a passageway having two symmetric windows on either side. In order to increase the space, the wall was demolished and a wooden triforium added on the western side of the sanctuary. Later, two vestries were added on the northeast and southeast corners for use as a baptistery and as dressing rooms. Both of the vestries extended along the corresponding facades. The church was 18.2 meters (60 feet) long and 10.9 meters (36 feet) wide. The entrance of the women's gallery (*gynaeceum*) was from the southwest. To the south was an ancient Greek church called Holy Trin-

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<sup>30</sup> Inchichian, *Ashkharhagrutun*, p. 387.

ity and a cemetery.<sup>31</sup> Among the tombstones of the cemetery there were two bearing the dates 1605 and 1703.<sup>32</sup> Bzhshkian has written: "This church is built a little deep, so that the women's side and the triforium are not very light. Behind the altar, there is the memorial inscription, 'The last time the church [*tajar*] was rebuilt as a gift of Khoja Shamshadin (Shemshedin) and his wife [*koghakits*] Zono . . . in the year 1431'."<sup>33</sup>

### **Surb Hovhannes (Saint John) Church**

Surb Hovhannes is believed originally to have been a Greek Orthodox church (Fig. 2-3).<sup>34</sup> Its chronology is not yet fully detailed. The oldest tombstone in its cemetery dates to 1434. There is also information that the church was renovated in 1805.<sup>35</sup> Surb Hovhannes was located in the Berberoghlu quarter of the city's eastern suburb. It had three apses on the eastern side with a vestry on the southeastern corner. The smallest Armenian church of the city, the sanctuary's design was typical of the three-nave-basilica with four central columns. The church had two entrances, one from the south and the other from the west for the gynaecium, which had a wooden triforium above.<sup>36</sup> The courtyard was occupied by houses belonging to Armenians and Greeks.<sup>37</sup> The complex also had a ruined bell tower and a wooden gavit, which for the lack of space was built on the south side.

### **The Church of Surb Oksent or Sulu (Having Water) Monastery**

The earliest evidence about Surb Oksent or Auxentios is from 1378 (Fig. 2-4). The complex included the main church, a small baptistery, a wooden gavit, and a cemetery. The internal dimensions of the church were 20 by 7.8 meters (67 by 26 feet) and the external dimensions were 24 by 10 meters (79 by 33 feet). It was the community's largest church. Surb Oksent was of the three-nave-basilica style, with the central nave being 4.5 meters (15 feet) wide. As was usual, the church had

<sup>31</sup> Mkhitarian, *Vep gaghtakanutian*, pp. 129-34.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., pp. 132-33.

<sup>33</sup> Bzhshkian, *Patmutiun Pontosi*, p. 81.

<sup>34</sup> Inchichian, *Ashkharhagrutian*, p. 387.

<sup>35</sup> Mkhitarian, *Vep gaghtakanutian*, p. 138.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Bzhshkian, *Patmutiun Pontosi*, p. 82.

two entrances, one of them for the gynaeceum. There was an internal wooden triforium built in 1842 at the northwest corner. The altar had three apses. The baptistery was in a vestry adjacent to the northern apse. The bell tower was over the corner room from where an intermediate entrance led to the administrative rooms of the prelate on the northwest side of the complex.<sup>38</sup> The complex was renovated in 1838. There is a *khachkar* (memorial cross stone) in the cemetery bearing the date 1478.<sup>39</sup>

In addition to the above-mentioned churches, there were small chapels in the surrounding Armenian villages. Many of these were a particular kind of structure that was called *Khachatur*. These were usually small cruciform domed churches or mono-nave basilicas. The erection of Khachaturs was a local tradition thought to have been brought by the Armenians who had migrated from the medieval Armenian capital of Ani.<sup>40</sup>

### *The Armenian Monasteries of Trebizond*

There were several Armenian monasteries in the vicinity of Trebizond, among them Surb Gevorg of Kohana, Surb Grigor Lusavorich and Surb Sargis of Kelkit, Surb Khach of Asamut, and Surb Vardan of Surmene.<sup>41</sup> The most renowned monasteries were Surb Amenaprkich, in the eastern hills outside Trebizond, and Surb Prkich, in the vicinity of Gumushkhane.

#### **The Monastery of Amenaprkich (All Savior)**

Amenaprkich vank was popularly known as Khaymakli or Kaymakli monastir or Shamshadli (Shemshedli), referring to the sponsor of its restoration, Stepan of Hamadan, a native of Shamshadin (Fig. 2-5). All Savior monastery served as the prelacy headquarters of the Trebizond diocese. It was located on a hillside to the east of the city near the village of Aghjabad. Amenaprkich was established by Catholicos Petros Getadardz in 1020.<sup>42</sup> The complex consisted of the church, a gavit,

<sup>38</sup> Mkhitarian, *Vep gaghtakanutian*, pp. 134-37.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., pp. 136-37.

<sup>40</sup> Bzhshkian, *Patmutiun Pontosi*, p. 82.

<sup>41</sup> See T. Palian, "Hay vanorayk" [Armenian Monasteries], *Biuzantion* (Constantinople), 1900, nos. 1067, 1074, 1078, 1148, 1158.

<sup>42</sup> Oskian, *Vankere*, p. 228.

three chapels dedicated to Surb Harutian, Surb Hovhannes, and Surb Astvatsatsin, a bell tower, prelacy offices, and, on the south, a fountain dating to 1489 (Fig. 3). There were also a stable, a garden, rooms for pilgrims, cells for the monks, a kitchen, external post, a fence, and, on the northern side, a cemetery.

All Savior Church was a small stone structure. According to the inscription carved on the entrance, it was rebuilt by Stepan of Shamshadin on the foundation of an existing church from the year 1324. Another inscription read: "I am Mkrtich, son of Khoja Stepanos, who by the command of the God built the chapel of Surb Karapet [Hovhannes Karapet—John the Precursor], with the surrounding fence of the monastery, in memory of my parents and all relatives."<sup>43</sup> Bishop Abel Mkhitarian has written: "The Church of All Savior is a common-stone-built rectangular edifice having a recessed altar at the east. The building has an internal dimension of 9.1 meters (30 feet) from the entrance to the front of the apse and an internal width of 7.2 meters (23.5 feet). The external length of the church is 11.8 meters (39 feet). The roof is built of stone, too."<sup>44</sup> This means that the main church of the monastery was a 9 by 12 meters (29 by 39.3 feet) domed basilica with four central columns. The diameter of the dome was 5 meters (16.4 feet). The church had two entrances, from west and south. The interior, including the semicircular wall of the apse, was decorated with flower images. The design work was carried out under the patronage of Bishop Hakob and the Prelate Avetik in the years 1593-1622. There were three windows in the interior, two on the south and the other on the main axis of the altar.<sup>45</sup> According to the description of Bzhshkian, the church had a triforium adjacent to the main entrance.<sup>46</sup> The zhamatun was located in front of the western entrance as an auxiliary structure leading to the church. It was built later than the main church. Bishop Mkhitarian had noted: "The masonry of the zhamatun is primitive and the roof is gabled. There is a sacred well inside. As usual, the entrance is from the west."<sup>47</sup>

The Chapel of Surb Astvatsatsin was the oldest of the monastery's three sanctuaries. It was located at the west end of the northern wall of

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<sup>43</sup> Palian, "Hay vanorayk," 1900, nos. 1067, 1078.

<sup>44</sup> Mkhitarian, *Vep gaghtakanutian*, p. 117.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 118.

<sup>46</sup> Bzhshkian, *Patmutiun Pontosi*, p. 82.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, pp. 118, 121.

the main church. The circumference of the church was square in proportion. The Chapel of Surb Hovhannes served as the monastery's baptistery. It was located at the eastern end of the northern facade. Adjacent to the main entrance was an administrative room. The fence of the monastery passed by the northern wall of the chapel. Here was a separate passage leading to a subterranean sheep fold under the administrative room. The chapel was located at the southeast corner of the main church. It, too, was built by Stepanos of Shamshadin in 1422. Actually all three chapels were not more than vestries located at the corners of the main church. Only the southwest corner had a special entrance for the gynaeceum. The bell tower was originally a three storey building, but the upper storey was cut away at the behest of the Ottoman authorities. In 1648, Khoja Astvatsatur converted the second floor into the Surb Errordutian (Holy Trinity) chapel and built the wooden belfry.<sup>48</sup>

The rooms for pilgrims and the cells for the monks were adjacent to the fence of the monastery at the southwest corner of the main entrance and to the northwest. The cells for royalty were also on the northern extension.<sup>49</sup> The external post or *drsi-tun* was on the road leading from the monastery to the city. It was a small complex including a chapel called Surb Mamas (which was in ruins in the nineteenth century) and a post-house with other auxiliary rooms for temporary use. According to Bzhshkian, there was a subterranean passage connecting Surb Mamas with the altar of the main church of Amenaprkich.<sup>50</sup>

### The Monastery of Surb Prkich (Saint Savior)

Surb Prkich vank, located near Gumushkhane to the south of Trebizond, consisted of a small church and a gavit (Fig. 4). Its famous door was decorated with flower motives carved on walnut wood. Oskian states that this monastery and the Monastery of Hovakim and Anna of Tokat were built by the same masters. Fortunately, Oskian has published a picture of the door of the Hovakim and Anna vank (Fig. 5), which helps to give an idea about what must have been the splendid entrance to Surb Prkich.<sup>51</sup> The main church of the monastery

<sup>48</sup> Mkhitarian, *Vep gaghtakanutian*, p. 116.

<sup>49</sup> Oskian, *Vankere*, p. 227.

<sup>50</sup> Bzhshkian, *Patmutiun Pontosi*, p. 85.

<sup>51</sup> Oskian, *Vankere*, picture on the backside of the cover page.

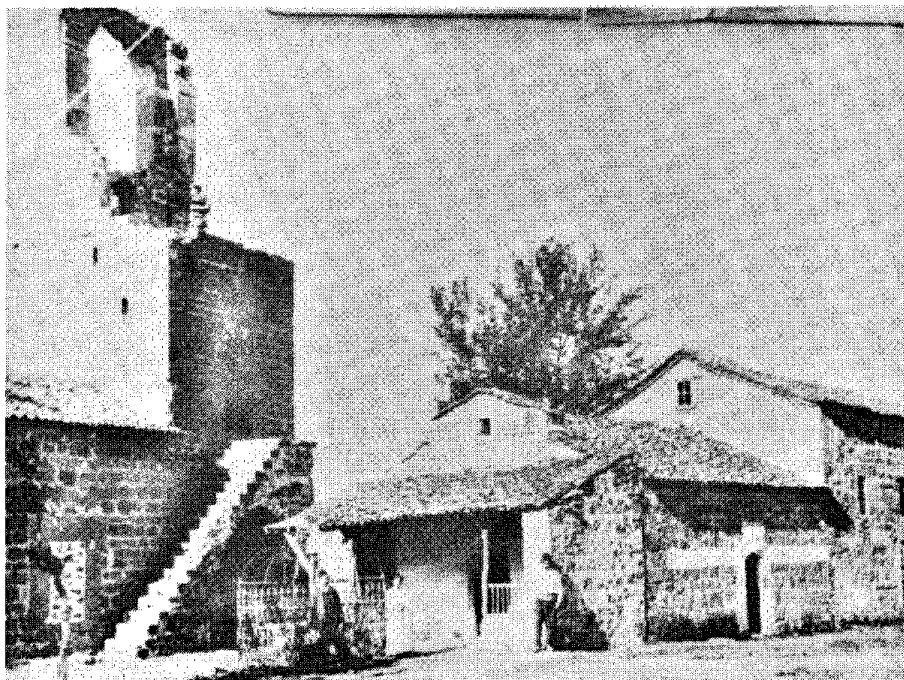


Fig. 3. Trebizond: Amenaprkich (Kaymakli) Monastery

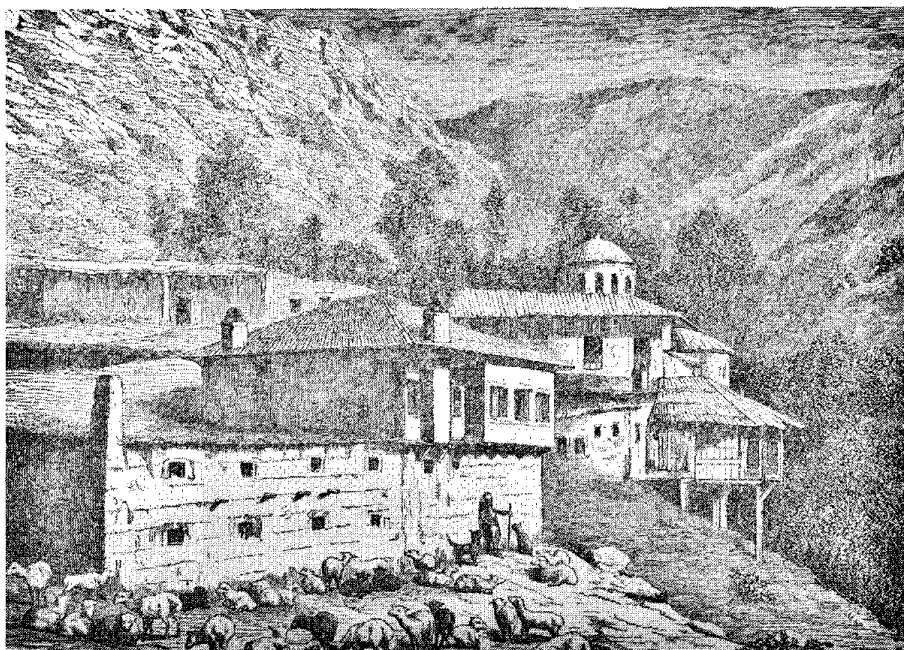


Fig. 4. Gumushkhane: Rendition of Surb Prkich Monastery





Fig. 5. Door of the Church of Saints Hovakim and Anna Monastery, Tokat

was located in the left corner of the complex and was surrounded by a metal fence. The entrance was framed by a stone arch. Oskian states that the church, designed by the goldsmith Zugimian, was glorious.<sup>52</sup> Saint Savior had three apses. The interior included a dressing cabinet, a baptistery alcove, and at the right of the entrance a stone staircase leading to the triforium. The church was domed, the calotte (internal cavity) of which was tiled.

### *The National Caravanserai—Dashkhan*

The single identifiable secular monument of Trebizond's Armenian community is the national caravanserai called *Dashkhan*, which dates to the thirteenth or fourteenth century. Minas Bzhshkian states: "Dashkhan is one of remarkable buildings of the bazaar. It is a two-storied arcaded building of stone."<sup>53</sup> Although there is scarce evidence about the building, its features can be reconstructed by examining similar type structures in the area. As a two-storied caravanserai, it would have had an inner courtyard with four towers at the corners. This parallels Kurt Erdmann's descriptions of other caravanserais: Thahdopa, Khatun, Durak, Chakalli, and Chinchinli khans, for example.<sup>54</sup> This was also true of the dashkhans in most of the Armenian towns neighboring the Pontus area, such as the one in Erznka (Turkish: Erzincan; Erzincan).

### *Armenian Communities of the Coastal Towns*

There were also Armenian communities in other towns of the Pontus region (Fig. 6). They may be divided into coastal and continental towns. As the Pontus was a crossroad of world trade, the important towns were on the Black Sea littoral. Among those inhabited by Armenians were Sinope, Samsun, Unieh, Fatsa, Ordu, Kerasund, Tireboli, and Rize, as well as many surrounding villages.

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<sup>52</sup> *Jeride i Sharkie* [Oriental Gazette], 1899, no. 4303, as cited by Oskian, *Vankere*, pp. 237-38.

<sup>53</sup> Bzhshkian, *Patmutiun Pontosi*, p. 79.

<sup>54</sup> Kurt Erdmann, *Das anatolische Karavansaray des 13. Jahrhunderts*, pt. 1 (Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag, 1961), illustration nos. 13, 14, 20, 22, 37.

## Sinope and Samsun

Sinope is at the extreme west end of the Pontus.<sup>55</sup> The town has ancient origins, reportedly established by the Miletians (seventh century B.C.). Bzhshkian observed: "The Christian inhabitants are residing outside the fortress in the suburbs. Most of the inhabitants are brave Greeks. Armenians here are few and grouped by their houses around a small church in the vicinity of the Greek quarters."<sup>56</sup> Samsun (Samson) is located to the east of Sinope. Straddling the Charshamba River, it has curvilinear layout around the harbor. Evliya Chelebi noted: "The strong castle constructed of stone is beside the beach. Parts of it were ruined by Russian invasions but reconstructed again. The castle has 70 ramparts and 2,000 battlements. The roofs of the houses are tiled; all over the city are scattered green woods. There are seven schools in the town."<sup>57</sup> The statistics given by V.T. Maevskii at the beginning of the twentieth century show that 20 percent of Samsun's population was Armenian, making up 400 families.<sup>58</sup> Bzhshkian reported that the Armenian quarters were mainly on the coastline near the bazaars. There were four Armenian quarters on the northeastern skirts of the citadel where other Christian inhabitants also resided. The quarters were clustered around two churches, each having an elementary school. The Armenian homes with their small gardens sloped from the north to the east of the city.<sup>59</sup> Depending on the source, the Armenian population at the beginning of the twentieth century ranged from 3,000 to 6,000 inhabitants. In the *sanjak* or county as a whole there were approximately 20,000 Armenians.<sup>60</sup>

## Unieh and Fatsa

Unieh (Greek: Inion)<sup>61</sup> neighbors Samsun to the east. The semicircular harbor of the town is on its western side. The town being located on a slope, the houses were arranged densely in terraced order. The layout

<sup>55</sup> The town is also referred to as Sinap, Karabi, Corifi.

<sup>56</sup> Bzhshkian, *Patmutiun Pontosi*, p. 45.

<sup>57</sup> Evliya Chelebi, *Siahat-Name*, pp. 37-38.

<sup>58</sup> Maevskii, *Puti Maloy Azii*, p. 85.

<sup>59</sup> Bzhshkian, *Patmutiun Pontosi*, pp. 46-47.

<sup>60</sup> Hakobyan, Melik-Bakhshyan, Barseghyan, *Hayastani teghanunneri bararan*, vol. 4, p. 489.

<sup>61</sup> Also Unia, Unie, Uniye, Yunie, Yunia.

of the town faced the sea as an amphitheater around the harbor. The town had antique features in its four-tiered fortification with a gate on each side of its rectangular perimeter.<sup>62</sup> It was arranged around a *Cardo* (north-south street) and *Decumanus Maximus* (east-west street). The Armenian quarter was next to the Greek quarters on the northwest side of the town. The Armenian minority, consisting of forty families, concentrated around the Aramian school and Surb Minas Church. According to an inscription on the tympanum of the church's entrance, the structure was built in 1831. Its composition was like others in the region—a simple church with a gavit. It included a wooden triforium and gynaeceum accessed from a separate entrance. The church was rebuilt after a fire in 1840. All the walls were made of stone but the roof remained wooden and was tiled. Another Armenian church existed in a Greek quarter to the south of the town, demonstrating that Armenians had lived here since medieval times.<sup>63</sup> The Armenian population in the town in 1915 numbered 1,000, and, in the kaza (district) as a whole, 10,769 inhabitants.<sup>64</sup>

Fatsa<sup>65</sup> is a short distance to the east of Unieh. The placement is a green promontory with the Polaman River flowing from the east and the Elekjie River from the west. The Armenian Surb Astvatsatsin Church was a small edifice built over the promontory in 1809. Ten or more Armenian families lived around the church at the skirt of the hillside. The structure was tiled and had a foundation inscription over the tympanum of its entrance.<sup>66</sup> At the beginning of the twentieth century, there were about 1,800 Armenians in the town.<sup>67</sup>

### Ordu, Kerasund, and Tireboli

Ordu<sup>68</sup> is some distance to the east of Fatsa toward the Yoroz promontory. The town stretches out to the shore and forms a harbor on the south beyond the promontory. Around the harbor are the shops, lanes,

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<sup>62</sup> Bzhshkian, *Patmutiun Pontosi*, p. 51.

<sup>63</sup> Mkhitarian, *Vep gaghtakanutian*, pp. 144-49.

<sup>64</sup> Hakobyan, Melik-Bakhshyan, Barseghyan, *Hayastani teghanunneri bararan*, vol. 3, p. 939, and vol. 5, p. 192.

<sup>65</sup> Also Fatsa, Fatisa, Fatisane, Fathsos.

<sup>66</sup> Mkhitarian, *Vep gaghtakanutian*, pp. 149-52.

<sup>67</sup> Hakobyan, Melik-Bakhshyan, Barseghyan. *Hayastani teghanunneri bararan*, vol. 5, p. 510.

<sup>68</sup> Also Kotyora, Ordu.

and other commercial buildings adjacent to the former Greek quarters. To the east, at a meeting place of three rivers, lies a beautiful plain. The Armenian quarter, made up of some 130 families, was on the western side of the town. Some of these families had Hamshen origins or were immigrants from neighboring Kerasund. The community's Church of Surb Astvatsatsin, standing in the heart of the Armenian quarter, was rebuilt over a preexisting structure in 1852.<sup>69</sup> The Armenian population of the town in 1915 was about 5,000.<sup>70</sup>

Kerasund or Giresun<sup>71</sup> lies between Ordu and Trebizond city. The location of the town is at the meeting place of two valleys. Its layout was centered around a citadel at the bottom of which were the residential quarters along the shoreline. The harbor was divided by the castle into two parts, the eastern harbor or Demir Kapu liman and the western harbor or Lonja liman. Both of the harbors lay behind the castle (constructed by the Greek Comneni emperors) so that they were sheltered from the sea.<sup>72</sup> All the commercial buildings of the town ranged around the harbor, as did the customs house, the quarantine area, and the courthouse to the east of the castle. The citadel was in a state of ruin in the nineteenth century, with only the walls standing. The population of the city and its region from the medieval times consisted of Greeks and Armenians. At the beginning of the twentieth century, there were 1,500 Armenian inhabitants in their quarters below the citadel. They had a church with two rock-hewn altars dedicated to Surb Astvatsatsin and to Surb Sargis.<sup>73</sup> According to Bzhshkian, the church had been converted from a Greek Orthodox sanctuary.<sup>74</sup> There was an inscription over the northern apse bearing the date of 1702. In the southern apse was a khachkar from the year 1751.<sup>75</sup> While Bzhshkian was there (second decade of the nineteenth century), the Armenian community bought land to build another church on the southern outskirts of the town.<sup>76</sup> According to the Armenian dictionary of place-names, there were two

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<sup>69</sup> Mkhitarian, *Vep gaghtakanutian*, pp. 152-55.

<sup>70</sup> Hakobyan, Melik-Bakhshyan, Barseghyan, *Hayastani teghanunneri bararan*, vol. 5, p. 496.

<sup>71</sup> Also Gerasia, Girasun, Giresunt, Gerason, Girason, Kerasond, Kerasos, Kerason, Kirason, Kirasos, Kirisin, Pharnagia.

<sup>72</sup> Bzhshkian, *Patmutiun Pontosi*, p. 54.

<sup>73</sup> Inchichian, *Ashkharhagrutian*, p. 400; cf. Hakobyan, Melik-Bakhshyan, Barseghyan, *Hayastani teghanunneri bararan*, vol. 3, p. 103.

<sup>74</sup> Inchichian, *Ashkharhagrutian*, p. 400.

<sup>75</sup> Mkhitarian, *Vep gaghtakanutian*, pp. 158-59.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 160.

Armenian churches in the city. The old church dedicated to Surb Grigor Lusavorich (Gregory the Illuminator) was built in 1269, while the later Surb Sargis was rock hewn and located at the skirt of the citadel. Until the deportations in 1915, there was an Armenian school next to Saint Gregory Church.<sup>77</sup>

Tireboli or Tripoli<sup>78</sup> is a small town located on a promontory west of Trebizond. According to tradition the city originally consisted of three individual towns or fortresses bearing the names Guruje Kale, Castle of the Hill, and Bedroma.<sup>79</sup> It was divided into two main parts called the eastern town and the western town. The Turkish population lived next to the castle; the Greek inhabitants were concentrated to the north of the Turkish quarter; and the Armenian community was located near the commercial center on the coast. Tireboli had two harbors, one facing each town. As usual, the Armenian quarter, which consisted of about fifty families, was arranged around the church and a community administration building. At the beginning of the twentieth century, there were 1,500 Armenian inhabitants.<sup>80</sup>

## Rize

Rize lies to the east of Trebizond at the far end of the Pontus.<sup>81</sup> The town is located around a gulf and has a linear layout spread along the harbor. The town planning principle was the same as in other places, with a citadel on the hill and a sheltered harbor beyond the castle and city quarters. A river passing through the bazaar divided the city into two parts. The Armenian community of some twenty families had a church in the Rosh quarter.<sup>82</sup> According to Vital Cuinet's statistics at the end of the nineteenth century, there were 5,100 Armenians in the Rize district.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Hakobyan, Melik-Bakhshyan, Barseghyan, *Hayastani teghanunneri bararan*, vol. 3, p. 103.

<sup>78</sup> Also Dribol, Driopolis, Kentrenos, Thirepolu, Tirebolu.

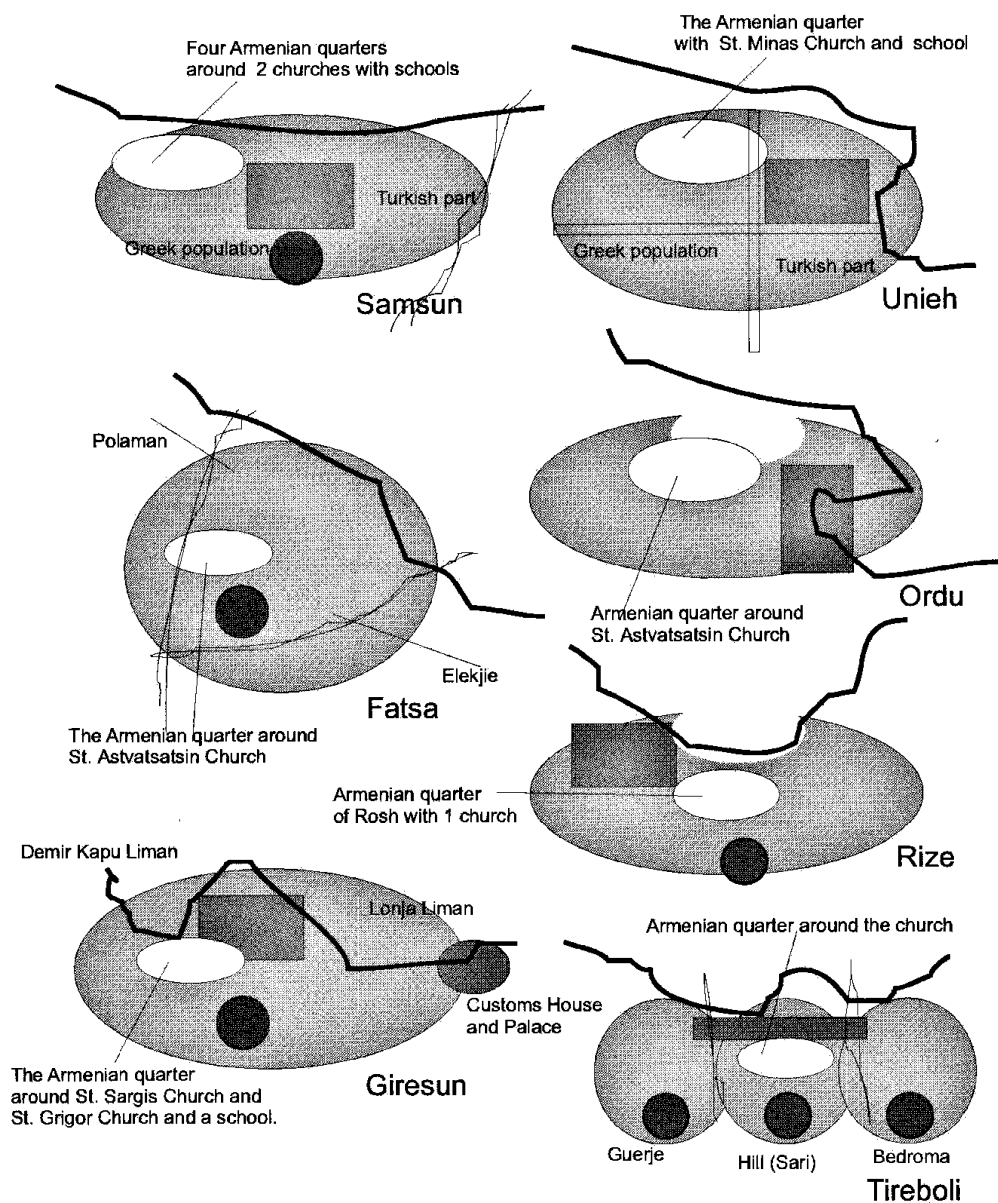
<sup>79</sup> Bzhshkian, *Patmutiun Pontosi*, p. 155.

<sup>80</sup> Hakobyan, Melik-Bakhshyan, Barseghyan, *Hayastani teghanunneri bararan*, vol. 5, p. 130; Mkhitarian, *Vep gaghtakanutian*, pp. 161-63.

<sup>81</sup> Also Irize, Emporion, Riza, Rizon, Rizos, Rizus.

<sup>82</sup> Bzhshkian, *Patmutiun Pontosi*, p. 94.

<sup>83</sup> Vital Cuinet, *La Turquie d'Asie: Géographie administrative, statistique, descriptive et raisonnée de chaque province de l'Asie-Mineure*, vol. 1 (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1892), p. 119. [Editor's note: Cuinet may have based this figure on statistics compiled at a time when Artvin was included administratively in the Rize district].



#### Location of Armenian Quarters in the Towns of the Pontus Region

**Legend** ■ The Downtown ○ The Armenian Quarters ● The Citadel — Coastline

Fig. 6. Location of Armenian Quarters in the Towns of the Pontus Region

### *Inland Armenian Communities*

The inland towns of the Pontus inhabited by Armenians were Charshamba and Gumushkhane. Charshamba is in the hinterland of Samsun, situated in a low-lying plain. The town is divided into eastern and western halves by the Charshamba (Yeshil Irmak) River. In the larger eastern half were the bazaar and other commercial buildings, as well as the city hall (*serai*) and mayor's residence. The Armenian quarter, together with the Greek quarters, was in the Christian western sector. According to travel descriptions, the houses were attractive, with gardens and other amenities. Many members of the Armenian community of 150 families were bread merchants. The Mamikonian-Shushanian school was established in 1871. Surb Astvatsatsin Church (built in 1790 and rebuilt in 1816) had four altars. The semicircular eastern side of the church was built of stone, while the other parts and the roof were wooden.<sup>84</sup> A nearby village called Khurshunlu was populated entirely by Hamshen Armenians.<sup>85</sup>

The Armenian inhabitants of Charshamba in the first decade of the twentieth century numbered 5,000 and with the surrounding seventeen villages, 10,000. In 1950, there were still 560 Armenians in Charshamba.<sup>86</sup> Gumushkhane was one of the main towns southeast of Trebizond. Of the 1,600 families, there, 200 were Armenian in the nineteenth century. Aside from Surb Astvatsatsin Church, built in 1269, the prelate's seat was in the Monastery of Surb Sargis, a few kilometers from the city. In this mountainous district, there were some villages populated by Hamshen Armenians.<sup>87</sup>

Gumushkhane was the Turkish name of the city, the original Greek name of which was the Greek form Argyroupolis (Latin: Argypopolis), meaning place or mine of silver. Of a population of 40,000 in the district, the Armenians numbered 12,500 before the calamity of 1915. They maintained two schools. Earlier, much of the Armenian population had moved to neighboring regions such as Baberd (Baiburt), Erzinka (Erzinjan), Trebizond, Sebastia (Sivas) and more distant places

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<sup>84</sup> Mkhitarian, *Vep gaghtakanutian*, pp. 140-44.

<sup>85</sup> Bzhshkian, *Patmutiun Pontosi*, p. 49.

<sup>86</sup> Hakobyan, Melik-Bakhshyan, Barseghyan, *Hayastani teghanunneri bararan*, vol. 4, p. 224.

<sup>87</sup> Bzhshkian, *Patmutiun Pontosi*, pp. 92-93.



such as Constantinople, Russia, and France. In 1970, 360 Armenians still remained in Gumushkhane.<sup>88</sup>

*Other Armenian Monuments  
of the Pontus and Surrounding Areas*

The architecture of Armenian monuments of the Pontus had special features because of Greek-Armenian interrelations. Neighboring Armenian sites had certain monuments that were similar to those of the Pontus. Examples were the Monastery of Hovakim and Anna of Tokat, Chordvan, Barkhar, Hohu, Oshk and others of the Tortum area; Varzahan of Baberd; Goguba (Surb Gevorg) and Surb Sargis of Ardahan; Karmir vank and Surb Astvatsatsin of Karin (Erzerum); as well as many churches of Constantinople (Surb Teodoros, Surb Astvatsatsin of the Ayub quarter, Surb Karapet of the Iskudar quarter). For this survey, it is sufficient to consider the eight-apsed church of Varzahan bordering on the area.

The eight-apsed church is located near the village of Varzahan on the Trebizond-Erzerum road, about 10 kilometers from Baiburt. At the beginning of the twentieth century, there were many other Armenian churches, many in a semi-ruined condition, in and around Varzahan. The church was octagonal. According to the measurements done by Walter Bachmann at the beginning of the twentieth century, the church had the following features: every side of the conches was 4.70 meters (15.75 feet) long, and the thickness of the wall was about 95 centimeters (38 inches).<sup>89</sup> The internal diameter of the church was 9.4 meters (31 feet). On every corner of the octagon were six-sided and eight-sided polyhedral columns with a diameter of almost 1.4 meters (4.6 feet). From the inside the columns stood free of the walls. The area for prayer was circular, the diameter being 5.7 meters (18.7 feet). The three entrances on the northern, southern, and western sides measured 1.15 meters (3.8 feet) in width on the northern, southern, and western sides, were designed without tympanum, and were bordered by rectangular frames as is still seen, for example, in Surb Hovhannes Church of Avan near Erevan.

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<sup>88</sup> Hakobyan, Melik-Bakhshyan, Barseghyan, *Hayastani teghanunneri bararan*, vol. 1, pp. 916-17.

<sup>89</sup> Walter Bachmann, *Kirchen und Moschen in Armenien und Kurdistan* (Vienna: J.C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1913), pp. 49-53.

The high quality of the masonry on the walls and columns of the church shown in the pictures convey a skilled technique. Little is now left of the arches of the conches, and the floor of the church is under broken stones and a layer of soil 2 meters deep. The church was built of yellowish limestone. The surface of the walls was hewn with great care and skill. The masonry was of the Armenian *midis* type, having stone rows on the external and internal sides joined by a layer of compound mortar called *kipar*. The walls were in polychromatic manner treated by fascias on certain levels. The stones were quite large, especially at the lower tiers. The transition from the apsidiole of the conches to the dome was by means of squinch archs. The composition of the church was an intermediate solution between the Armenian Aghtamar type and Greek churches backed by eight supports. Actually, the design of the bearing columns resembles the sixth-century church of Surb Echmiadzin of Soradir, the prototype of Aghtamar. The axial window of the altar was a combination of three openings. The axis was emphasized by a circular window over the central opening of three windows, a design usually seen in certain Armenian monuments from early medieval times.<sup>90</sup> The interior of the church was covered with wall paintings. All the external angles were designed by alcoves divided into two parts as in Aghtamar, Surb Zoravar of Eghvard, Irind, and other churches.

### Conclusion

Pontus is an elongated land that stretches along the southern coast of the Black Sea and lies between the sea and the historic Armenian Highland. It was a bridge connecting Armenia to Europe, so that many of the coastal towns had Armenian communities. The Armenian population was made up largely of merchants and shopkeepers who lived in their own quarters near the city centers. Typically, the Armenian quarters were grouped around the community's churches. Down through the centuries, the Armenian communities formed their own style of art and architecture which combined Armenian traditional with local

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<sup>90</sup> See Nikolai M. Tokarskii, *Iz istorii srednevekovogo stroitel'stva v Taykskom kniazhestve* [From the History of Medieval Construction Activity in Tayk Principality] (Erevan: Hayastan, 1988), illustration nos. 14, 28-30, 46-48. See also Tiran Marutyan, *Tayki chartarapetakan hushardzannere* [The Architectural Monuments of Tayk] (Erevan: Hayastan, 1972), illustration nos. 4-6, 32.

forms. This was evident in the architecture of the churches, schools, prelacies, and residences. Only remnants of these structures remain, making it all the more important for careful studies based on archival materials, the Russian military surveys, and other documentation. Study of the community traditions of the Pontus Armenians has not only historical importance but also immediate relevance to understanding the Armenian architecture and planning of past centuries.

In conclusion, one may state that some of main features of Armenian architecture of the Pontus region are as follows:

1. The Armenian churches examined are of the medium-sized-basilica and domed-basilica types. There are also some instances of multi-apsidal composition which are analogous to Varzahan, to Goguba and Surb Sargis of the Ardahan region, and to other churches.

2. The functionality of the churches is based on compounds that include beside the church itself, gavits, gynaeceums, bell towers, side-chapels, baptistery alcoves or vestries, wells and fountains, courtyards, and cemeteries.

3. The main entrances of the churches are surrounded by molded rectangular frames in order to give a monumental impression.

4. The gavits are vaulted and single-naved, having apses on the western or southern sides.

5. Without exception, the churches have two entrances, one for general use and the other for the gynaeceums or the women's gallery. This is a vital Armenian-Byzantine typological correlation specific to the region.

6. The altar, consisting of three apses arranged in linear order, is a favorite composition for all of the churches.

7. Two-storied or three-storied bell towers are common.

8. Most of the churches are built of limestone in their supporting parts. In the other parts, light-weight materials are used. The roofs are mainly gabled of wood and are tiled.

9. The openings of the structures are vertical and narrow. The windows are in traditional Armenian style.